

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
TO THE  
ST. MARYCHURCH DISTRICT COUNCIL, 1898.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—

I have much pleasure in handing you my annual report for 1898. It is the twenty-first I have had the honour of compiling for this district.

*Birth Rate.* There have been registered in the past year 139 births—20·2 per 1,000. This is 11 more than in 1897, while in 1896 there were 141; in 1895, 152; and in 1894, 143. There were 71 boys and 68 girls.

*Death Rate.* The number of deaths was 93, or 13·5 per 1,000. This is slightly higher than in 1897, when there were 88 deaths, or a rate of 12·8 per 1,000. The average for the previous ten years is 100, or 14·5 per 1,000.

These figures are based on the census of 1891, viz. 6,846; say 6,850. The causes will be seen from the following tables :—

Causes of death in St. Marychurch, as required by the Local Government Board, 1898.						
NAME OF DISEASE.	UNDER 5 YEARS			OVER 5 YEARS.		
Small Pox ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Scarlatina ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Diphtheria ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Membranous Croup ...	0	...	...	0	...	...
Fevers { Typhus ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Enteric or Typhoid ...	0	...	...	0	...	...
Continued ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Relapsing ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Puerperal ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Cholera ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Erysipelas ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Measles ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Whooping Cough ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Diarrhoea and Dysentery	0	...	...	0	...	...
Rheumatic Fever ... ..	0	...	...	1	...	...
Ague ... ..	0	...	...	0	...	...
Phthisis ... ..	0	...	...	7	...	...
Bronchitis, Pleurisy, and Pneumonia ... ..	7	...	...	9	...	...
Heart Disease ... ..	0	...	...	11	...	...
Influenza ... ..	0	...	...	6	...	...
Injuries ... ..	0	...	...	2	...	...
All other Diseases ... ..	21	...	...	29	...	...
	28			65		
Total for 1898 ... ..	93					

These figures should be compared with those of previous years, in the following table :—

Causes of death in St. Marychurch for ten years.												
CAUSES.	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98		
Small Pox ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scarlatina ... ..	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
Diphtheria ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Membranous Croup ...	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fevers { Typhus ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enteric or Typhoid ...	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Continued ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Relapsing ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Puerperal ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Cholera ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Erysipelas ... ..	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Measles ... ..	2	0	0	5	3	0	1	5	0	0	0	0
Whooping Cough ... ..	0	6	1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0
Diarrhoea & Dysentery	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Rheumatic Fever ... ..	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Ague ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phthisis ... ..	4	6	9	3	11	7	10	12	16	7		
Bronchitis, Pleurisy, and Pneumonia ... ..	12	33	17	33	8	13	17	12	6	16		
Heart Disease ... ..	6	9	15	1	7	16	12	13	6	11		
Influenza ... ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	6		
Injuries ... ..	0	3	1	2	3	4	4	2	3	2		
All other Diseases ... ..	43	56	54	65	69	47	57	52	52	50		
	69	120	98	118	102	92	102	112	88	93		

The ages at which death took place were as follow : Under one year, 21; one and under five, 7; five and under fifteen, 1; fifteen and under twenty-five, 5; twenty-five and under sixty-five, 27; and sixty-five and upwards, 32.

Seven deaths occurred among visitors, viz., phthisis, 1; bronchitis, 1; heart disease, 1; injury, 1; "all other," 3. Excluding these, the rate for 1898 would be 12·5.

*Zymotic death rate.* On looking through the causes of death, it is a satisfaction to note that none are attributed to the ordinary zymotic diseases. Consequently the zymotic death rate will be *nil*. In 1897 it was '45 per 1,000; in 1896, 2'18; in 1895, '14; and in 1894, '75.

It must not be supposed, however, that because there has been no death from zymotic disease that therefore we have had no sickness. There have been 39 notifications, viz., diphtheria, 5; scarlatina, 25; and typhoid, 9. One case of diphtheria was imported, and in the homes of the remaining four defects enough were detected to account for anything.

Of the scarlatina cases one had a distinct history of importation, and I strongly suspect that the focus of a rather large group of cases also came from outside the district. I am very much inclined to believe that many of the scarlatina cases we have had this year has been due to some careless or wilful parent hiding a case, and letting the child run about in an infectious state. They have nearly all occurred in houses within a stone's throw of each other; the children have not all gone to the same school; and the only association has been the habit of neighbours' children playing together. When a succession of cases occurs, lasting over some weeks, and it all comes from one group of houses, it is very suspicious of this mode of propagation. Fortunately, the cases were for the most part very mild, and there have been no fatalities; but such utter callousness merits something more severe than a passing comment of mine.

We had more than the usual number of cyphoid cases, but quite enough was found in the home of each to account for them.

*Hospital for infectious diseases.* The little cottage has been invaluable; no less than nineteen patients having been admitted; two being cases of diphtheria and the others scarlatina. Both cases of diphtheria were treated with antitoxin, and the results were satisfactory. If no other patients had been admitted than these two cases of diphtheria, I should still say that the little hospital had shown the necessity for its existence. Only those who have had to treat diphtheria in the homes of the poor can imagine the inconvenience and risks to all concerned; and such would be very thankful for the advantages provided in the cottage hospital.

How many of the seventeen cases of scarlatina would have died if they had been left in their homes must, of course, be a mere conjecture. The mildest cases of this treacherous disease die if the nursing is neglected, and this the poor mother, with her multifarious duties, is quite unable to carry out. Just look for a moment at the mortality during each epidemic of measles. And why? Because the much occupied mother of the family cannot sit by the bedside all day and keep the little patient warm, the child runs about on stone floors and in draughty passages, bronchitis sets in, and too often death is the result. The same applies to mild cases of scarlatina. Independent of the advantages of isolation to the community at large, the watchful nursing and care bestowed on scarlatina cases in hospital is of immense value to the families themselves. In fact, look at the hospital from whatever aspect you may, it is of great value, not only to the community at large, but to the individual so isolated. Perhaps some day I may see built a model structure worthy of St. Marychurch, that will replace the cottage now in use.

*Barton Drainage.* At last it seems that this district is in a fair way to be properly drained. I do not remember in how many of my annual reports I have drawn attention to the necessity for attending to this matter, but a tremendous stride has been made during the past year. We have actually reached the stage when plans have been prepared and an application made for money to the Local Government Board. Mr. R. H. Worth has taken infinite pains in making his examinations, etc., and his report and scheme is, in my humble opinion, most accurate and satisfactory. The same may be said of his plans for altering the sewers of the rest of your district. If these two schemes are carried out as carefully as they are designed, the St. Marychurch district will be one of the best drained in the county.

*Cess pits.* Several of these nuisances have been done away with during the past year, but there are still others which must be attended to, and if possible cleared away.

*Public wells.* I have examined samples of water from sixteen wells, and, with the exception of one, they pass muster.

*Bake houses.* These have all been visited, and I report that they are kept in good condition.

I have made the usual general inspection of the district, and paid particular attention to Barton and Edginswell.

I remain, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

PAUL Q. KARKEEK, M.R.C.S., & L.S.A.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Torquay, January 12th, 1899.

